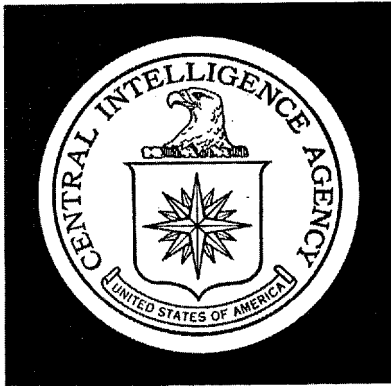


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Czechoslovakia: Despite Soviet pressure on Dubcek to rein in "extremists," the liberals may seek the resignations of central committee conservatives at a plenum on 29 May.

In a recent shift of tactics, a number of influential reformers have publicly called on recalcitrant holdovers from the Novotny days to leave voluntarily. One has stated in confidence that some 40 conservatives would be "persuaded" to resign at the plenum.

The party's main daily, Rude Pravo, has reported that many important party leaders demand that "discredited" persons leave the party. Yesterday, significant pressure was added by the Slovak central committee, which urged the Prague leadership to "dissociate itself energetically" from party members who "failed in the past" but still held important posts.

Dubcek is believed to be opposed to a liberal attempt to force the factional issue at the plenum. The conservatives, moreover, emboldened by recent Soviet pressures, have been markedly more outspoken in criticism of the liberal trend, and there is no sign that they intend to resign voluntarily. In fact some diplomats in Prague believe that conservative strength is underrated, and that the plenum may be the scene of considerable maneuvering.

Foreign Minister Hajek and an adviser have expressed confidence in the past few days that the USSR will not intervene in Czechoslovakia. They added, however, that Prague is making "physical and psychological preparations" to counter any such action and prophesied that the Czechoslovak Army and people would resist if it came. Their remarks indicate again the leadership's resolve to stand up to pressures from the Soviets and from their northern neighbors.

There is no information on the negotiations with Premier Kosygin. Diplomats in Prague expect that Kosygin is "chipping away" at the party]

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[action program, but believe that Dubcek has "turned the corner" as far as Soviet intervention is concerned. They credit Dubcek as well as National Assembly chairman Smrkovsky with "standing their ground" well.

Soviet troops remain on Czechoslovakia's frontiers in East Germany, Poland, and the USSR.

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